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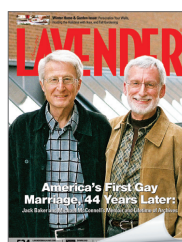
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ON THE COVER

The men who changed history, then donated it: Jack Baker and Michael McConnell, 44 years later.
Photo by Sophia Hantzes

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When not working at First Equity, Sherri has been a team lead volunteer feeding homeless and food deficient families in our community for over 30 years. She also enjoys spending time with her two grandsons!

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Go 'Round and 'Round and 'Round

I was working in my editorial logs the other day and noticed that there are only three regular issues left this year, before our year-end Yellow Pages Edition. We've got this one, the Holiday Gift Guide, and the Year in Review with Lavender Community Awards. That is shocking. It's just like the world of publishing, though, to be thinking about things that aren't seasonal, getting press releases for Valentine's Day back on the Fourth of July. More of a way of life than a song, let's do the time warp again.

Because we publish every two weeks, we might be working on stories that are going to be next month or the month after, or we might be dashing to get a story that just happened into the issue going to press. It's all about being as nimble as we can be. In the print issue, we're more about narratives than news, more about positives than negatives, more about local than national or global. These factors have helped *Lavender* be a lasting publication in Minnesota for over 20 years.

But wait, there's more.

There's so much more. Electronically, you can get our magazine on the website, and you can also get it delivered directly to your iPad and iPhone by Newsstand. Free as always. We are posting fresh content to our website, www.lavendermagazine.com, frequently. Sophia Hantzes is out there covering your events with her camera, posting photo galleries to the website as she goes. John Townsend and Shane Lueck are talking about a number of performances and productions; and Shane also posts up interviews with national celebrities and Crowdfund Roundups on the regular. Our Sports Page features events, photos, scores, and stories of our local GLBT sports organizations and leagues. The Lavender Yellow

Pages are there for you to be able to find businesses and services that support this community. And our Online Calendar, which you can add your events to for free, is one of the most popular destinations on the website, as is the Contests and Promotions section. Bookmark our website and give us a visit when you're making your rounds online; you never know what might be new on there for you. Follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/lavendermagazine) and Twitter (@lavmag) to find out as soon as we publish new stories on the website as well as other important information.

We don't talk about it in the magazine much, but we're also the people behind Big Gay News on our website, on Twitter (@biggaynews), and as the first gay podcast. The Twitter following is close to 78,000 at this point and grows each time I glance at it. The Big Gay News podcast began in 2006 and has been broadcast to the world nearly every weekday since. Bradley Traynor was its first producer and host, Pierre Tardif took over the reins a few years ago, and now I'll be the primary voice with Shane Lueck taking a day or two a week as well. I'm enjoying the new challenges in not only learning more about the global community, but also more about podcasting, itself, and how to pronounce words like "Södersjukhuset" like I had to do on my first day on the job...without sounding like Marge from *Fargo*.

So, what was I saying about there being only three issues left of this year? Never mind. The point gets lost in the shuffle.

Thank you for finding us, following us, engaging with us, and keeping us going all year 'round, for the past 20 years.

With you and with thanks,

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Reeling and Writhing ... and Fainting in Coils

I was reminded when again I read the reminder that someone who speaks broken English obviously knows a second language, that we are becoming more and more intolerant not only of other cultures, but even of their spoken words.

Recently at Sam's Club, a worker spoke to the cashier briefly in Somali. The man in front of me immediately chastised them for not speaking English, even though they were not carrying on a lengthy conversation. I interjected and said I thought it admirable that they spoke both languages. The shopper glared at me, snatched up his bags and departed.

Other societies don't share this isolationist attitude. A French friend's grade-school daughter was already learning English, while her older brother was studying German and English. The young man at the hotel desk in Amsterdam at 21 spoke Dutch, English, Italian, and Romanian. I do speak French to a degree, and can read it fairly well, having managed to get through the three Folio volumes of *Les Misérables*, but the most I could articulate in Dutch was "Dag!" (Hello).

So, when I announced my recent intention to study Dutch, the main response was, "Why?" I first listened desultorily to tapes, gained a few phrases, and then, realizing that self-motivation is not my forte, signed on at the University of Minnesota for Dutch 1001. There I've joined some dozen other students, most of whom, I discovered in our halting, introductory conversations, are a good half-century younger.

Of an evening, I must confess, I've also asked, "Why?" Why is a student of a certain age, for whom even common English words now and again fail to surface when summoned; who now needs the mental image of a stagecoach and team of horses in order to remember the name of his bank, decide to take on board "de woningbouwvereniging"?

Well, for one thing, I plan to revisit the Netherlands, and I think it only polite to be able to say even a "Good morning," "How are you?" or "See you later" to a native. Languages open new worlds, and opening on any level is a more wholesome and healing activity than battenning down the hatches, shriveling like a dried nut in its shell, and shutting out the wonder of this many-languaged world. ■



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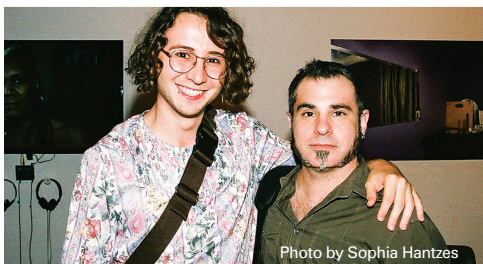
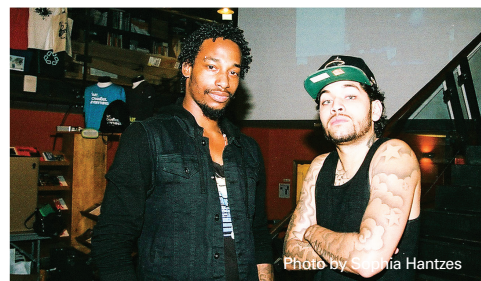
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OUR SCENE

ARTS & CULTURE | SPOTLIGHT | BY JOHN TOWNSEND



Beautiful – The Carole King Musical. Photo by Joan Marcus

BEAUTIFUL – THE CAROLE KING MUSICAL

Nov. 18–29

Orpheum Theatre, 910 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
800-982-2787

www.HennepinTheatreTrust.org

In the 1970s, everywhere you went you could feel the

earth move beneath your feet with the tunes of Carole King. For a time her *Tapestry* album was the top selling album. I remember saving up to buy my own *Tapestry* album in junior

high. Her low-tech style and gentle vocal phrasing meant she had to have a great voice to become successful. She didn't escape into the hard rock mentality that started taking root in that decade, which can mask vocal talent.

Now there's a Broadway show about King. Since it opened at the beginning of last year, *Beautiful – The Carole King Musical*, has become the highest-grossing production in the history of New York's Stephen Sondheim Theatre. King's youth, along with her artistic relationship and marriage to Gerry Goffin, and memorable tunes like *Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow* and *Up on the Roof* are recounted. Her other collaborators, Cynthia Weill and Barry Mann, are also a part of this smash hit bio-musical. It has been compared to *Jersey Boys*!

THE JUNGLE BOOK

Through Dec. 20

Children's Theatre

2400 3rd Ave. S., Minneapolis

612-874-0400

www.childrenstheatre.org

Greg Banks is a directorial genius who creates highly physicalized stage versions of classic children's literature that speak to today while keeping integrity to the original source. His staging of Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* is the best thing he has ever done at CTC.

The story of a little boy, Mowgli (an endearingly mercurial Eric Sharp), raised by wolves and misguided by monkeys, is presented on the multi-levels of Joe Stanley's evocative set where characters — all the rest of whom are nonhuman animals — move about on earthen-like steps and ropes. Green foliage all around. Nancy Schertler's lighting design, in sublime cohesion with the set, evokes a sense of infinitude into the jungle. Robert Frost might have called it "lovely, dark, and deep." The mood is numinously enhanced by Victor

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18 ➔



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FEMMES: A Tragedy. Photo by Rebecca J. Lawrence Photography

Zupanc's soundscape.

The actors play multiple roles but they have been given star turns within that. Autumn Ness, in a sleek manifestation, mines the protective and nurturing sense of the panther, Bagheera. Ness is one of the Twin Cities' great actresses and she has never been more brilliant. Children I spoke with afterward said she was their favorite. Also, few local actors so easily tap into the nature of compassion as does H. Adam Harris. In the role of Baloo the Bear and the Papa Wolf, he exudes a spirit of pure love and sweetness.

Casey Hoekstra continues to expand his range with a magnetic performance as carnivorous tiger, Sher Khan, who is out to chow down on Mowgli. Where Disney's animated classic encodes Sher Khan as lecherously gay, Hoekstra blends masculine power with Machiavellian cunning. Equally magnetic is Nastacia Nicole. Beware though. You'll fall in love with her as Mowgli's bravely protective mother wolf, but she might hypnotize you as Kaa, the slyly protective python. In addition, Annie Enneking's fight consulting and Alison Simples' costumes enrich Banks' gorgeously sumptuous production.

FEMMES: A TRAGEDY

Dec. 4-13

**Nimbus Theatre, 1517 Central Ave. NE, Minneapolis
612-227-1188**

www.tctwentypercent.org

Swing Out Sister and Break Out! Playwright Gina Young re-imagines Clare Boothe Luce's 1936 classic, *The Women*, in terms of femme lesbian culture, or subculture, if you prefer. The acclaimed 20% Theatre Company Twin Cities honors its commitment to feminist-queer content with this madcap romp into butch/femme relationships in comparison and contrast to hetero stereotypes. It also looks into polyamory and burlesque.

Artistic Director Claire Avitable says, "It is rare for 20% Theatre Company to produce a comedy, but *FEMMES: A Tragedy* so brilliantly combines our commitment to making the invisible visible with our dedication to work that provides strong, challenging, and fun roles for our artists. Plays about lesbians or queer women are so very rare, let alone plays that focus on queer femme identity. I wanted to raise awareness about femme invisibility in the queer community, and have a fantastic time doing it. This play is dedicated to anyone who identifies as femme, regardless of gender identity, assigned sex at birth, or sexuality."



An Octoroon. Photo by Rich Ryan

AN OCTOROON

**Through Nov. 15
Mixed Blood Theatre
1501 S. 4th St., Minneapolis
612-338-6131
www.mixedblood.com**

Will & Grace meets Trey Parker meets Dion Boucicault's 1859 drama, *The Octoroon*. This adds up to *An Octoroon* by Brandon Jacob-Jenkins. Though called a deconstruction, it's actually more of a free-wheeling riff. A playwright character comes out at the start of the performance in his tighty-whities and complains about his therapist and how others project stock expectations onto black playwrights. This unfolds into a spoof on the original drama that self-consciously turns greedy whites, a Native American, a giant rabbit, and various slaves into the brunt of jokes. It recalls the easy snark of Trey Parker. For example, slave women speak in contemporary jargon and a slave auction has the feel of models on a runway. Its humor by trivialization got lots of laughs the night I attended. That said, Jacob-Jenkins's mindset is uncannily reminiscent of *Will & Grace*, where identity politics is drenched in self-conscious identity references, nearing the point of solipsism. Directed with energetic melodramatic and vaudevillian style by the talented Nataki Garrett.

THE STORMS OF NOVEMBER

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Playwright Josh Cragun grew up by Lake Superior, appreciating its raw ferocious natural power. In his new play he shares, "I wanted the people in our story to not be the typical, the normal. I wanted them to be of the place but still unique. That is why our captain is a female (Heidi Berg). An outlier but not untrue. It was during the period in which the show is set that the first woman became captain of a Great Lakes carrier. Her name was Lillian Kluka. I think that's where the interesting stories always are: with the people who are a little different, who dare to stand out a little, who dare to take a stand, who don't let others tell them who they have to be. And a boat, a boat is a place where you can tell society to back off. You will create your own world, your own rules, live true to yourself. That's ultimately what this story is about: people searching for themselves, and finding a way to be true to that." ■

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Joseph Haj. Photo by Heidi Bohnenkamp

JOSEPH HAJ

THE GUTHRIE THEATER'S NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR SHARES HIS VISION

Joseph Haj recently took the reins as the Guthrie Theater's new artistic director, succeeding Joe Dowling who held that position for 20 years. Haj comes from the PlayMakers Repertory Company, the resident theater at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He served as its producing artistic director for

almost a decade.

The 51-year-old Arab American will be directing Shakespeare's *Pericles* and Rodgers and Hammerstein's *South Pacific* for the current Guthrie season; however, his duties and responsibilities stretch well beyond directing and preparing for those two productions. He will see that

the many other season productions on the Guthrie's three stages are provided with their multiple needs.

Moreover, Haj is essentially the theater's public face. Given that the Guthrie is the nation's flagship regional theater he must be a master of outreach. He has already been to greater Minnesota, having visited

Duluth and Rochester among other places, and has been very engaged in communication with various Twin Cities arts organizations. I spoke with Haj last month about how he sees things and what we might expect during his tenure.

I have heard you are keen on collaborations.
Joseph Haj: In this kind of

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job, one always looks for collaborations. I've spent my life in rehearsal rooms. I love collaborators. I love collaborating. It's only been three months and I haven't met all the artistic leaders in town but I've met a lot of them. And I'm such an admirer of so many of them. Many I've known for years and others are new to me who I'm just getting to know. But it's an extraordinary environment. There are many, many really great leaders of many wonderful organizations and so I would welcome and look for opportunities to collaborate and to partner. It's the early days and there's nothing in the works. But for the moment it's just getting to know each other and finding out what might make sense.

What are some of the differences between PlayMakers and the Guthrie?

JH: In some ways it's not dissimilar. How does one learn about the organization? How does one identify strengths and weaknesses? How do you figure out what you want to do about those weaknesses? What's the overarching vision? How do we set the direction toward that vision? These are leadership questions whether you're running a \$2.8 million theater or a \$28 million theater.

My thinking doesn't get 10 times different or better on account of the fact that I'm leading an organization 10 times larger. But there are, of course, meaningful challenges.

A simple, sort of funny observation: the director of marketing comes and suggests we're going to do a subscriber event. Well, I love a subscriber event. At PlayMakers all of the subscribers come. I speak for 20 minutes, and there's a Q&A and we talk about whatever. At PlayMakers I do one. Here I've done seven so far.

You've brought both diversity and tradition into the 2015–16 season. Anywhere one goes anymore,

one has to balance those things into the process.

JH: I'm not sure if anywhere you go you have to balance them. But I think the Guthrie specifically does. The Guthrie can't be an identity theater. The Guthrie can't be only a classics theater. It can't only be a contemporary theater. It can't only be a GLBT theater or be an African American theater or an Asian American theater, etc. The Guthrie, sort of by mandate, [has to be] a lot of things to a lot of people. I describe it in the New York City museum analogy. If you go to the Whitney in New York you know you're looking at American art. At the MOMA you look at contemporary art.

We have to be like the Metropolitan Museum of Art. If you want a Rothko you go to the fifth floor. If you want a Monet, that's on the third floor. If you want the remains of a mummified cat, that's on the first floor. We have to be that kind of an organization so we have to be a lot of things to a lot of people. So [this is] etched in this organization, the Guthrie's DNA. It was designed to be a classics theater. Tyrone Guthrie struggled mightily in year two whether to produce *Death of a Salesman* because he wasn't certain it was a classic, so there's that. So I think we have to be making classical plays and we have to be making sure we are making work in the western European canon, the American canon, the international canon, and we also need to be making contemporary work and new work. This is all part of what we need to do.

That canon of work is dominated by white men. It's not exclusive of course. There are many meaningful exceptions. But in the main I think we can agree that that field is dominated by white men. And the Guthrie remains committed to those stories and I think when we do, then it becomes

very interesting to me through whose lens are we visiting these stories. Who are we hiring? Who is the director? Who is the scenic designer? Who is the costume designer, the light designer, the sound designer, the composer? Who are the actors? Through whose lens do we get to tell these stories?

If we say that the plays of Shakespeare belong to all of us then they belong to all of us. They don't remain the province of just a sort of white male perspective because a white man happens to have written them 450 years ago. So it becomes really interesting to me, in the nature of these classic plays, who are the storytellers. Through whose eyes, through whose lens do we get to see them becomes a real criteria.

Can you tell me something about how you got inspired about theater?

JH: I managed to never see a play till my senior year in high school. I grew up in southwest Miami and in those days there was one theater. There was the Coconut Grove Playhouse. And I never went. It was no part of my young life at all. I was a child of recent immigrants and I couldn't figure anything out. I realized as a parent, when we had our daughter, that so much of a parent's job is to help a child navigate a society and cultural norms. My parents were recent immigrants. They didn't know what those cultural norms were.

So my whole young life was filled with a feeling of otherness, of not fitting in, not knowing the rules, wondering why every other kid got the memo of how to dress and I was in the wrong clothes, or it was the wrong time, the wrong place, behaving inappropriately. I was disaffected. I was pretty angry. I was a very, very poor student, one of those kids who went to school year-round. I failed things during the year, made them up in

summer school.

And then in my senior year in high school I had that one great teacher, Barbara Lowery. There was a first period drama class which sounded like a good thing to sleep through. So I signed up for it. I had no background in it at all, then knew immediately that this was something I wanted to try to pursue and it helped me. It organized the mind. I became a committed student. I got one degree, a second degree, a third degree. I went to graduate school at the University of North Carolina professional actor training program. I wanted so badly to be successful in this art form. I think it's a fairly ubiquitous story. It's one great teacher, one person who provides a path. And I'm forever grateful for it.

Do you have any ideas yet about GLBT issues and programming, play selection?

JH: As we think about plural voices, as we think about diversity inclusion in all of its many, many ways, of course GLBT conversations and concerns and areas of focus are strongly in our thinking as we consider future work.

Taylor Mac is coming this year. He's a great friend. And Colman Domingo's show *A Boy and His Soul*, which is very much a coming of age story of a gay man, a gay black man.

Note: If you were a Guthrie patron 25 years ago you may have seen the part of him that is a first-rate actor in the nationally acclaimed production of *The Screens* during the 1989-90 season and in a powerful performance as Henry Antrobus, the troubled son in *The Skin of our Teeth*. So Haj, too, is a part of the Guthrie's DNA. ■

For more information on Joseph Haj's inaugural Guthrie Theater season, visit www.guthrietheater.org

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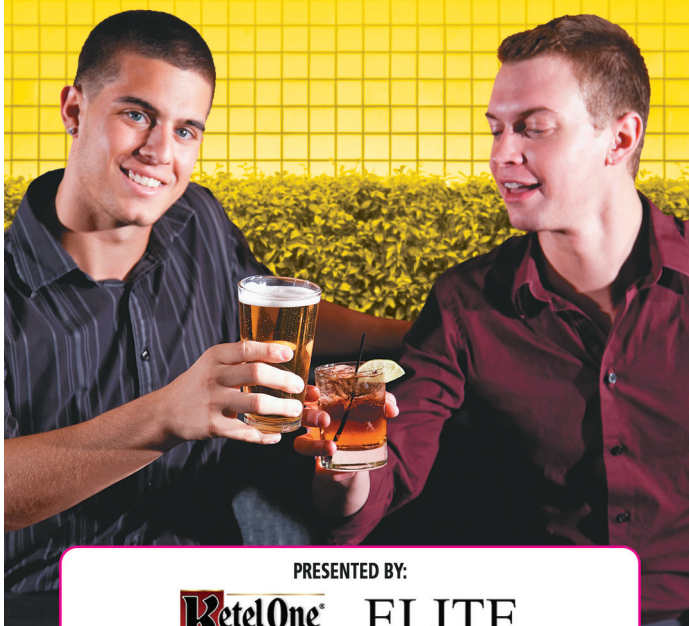
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OUR SCENE

EAT THE MENU | BY BRADLEY TRAYNOR | PHOTOS BY HUBERT BONNET



Some of the team at Eastside: Justin Teske, Beryl St. Jeanne, Nick Dugan, Remy Pettus, Alex Konopacky, Bill Fairbanks, Ryan Burnet, Tyler Lineburg (seated), Amaya Fairbanks (seated). Artwork by local artist, Drew Peterson.



Autumnal pork shoulder with curry caramel sauce.

Eastside

The Minneapolis restaurant scene is swiftly approaching embarrassment of riches territory and the object of my latest menu feasting is helping to tip that scale, one delicious bite at a time.

Eastside is the newest creation of award-winning restaurateur Ryan Burnet. You know him from such Minneapolis neoclassic dining wonders as Burch, Bar La Grassa, and Barrio. Together with executive chef Remy Pettus (late of Cosmos), the two have conspired to bring earnest, sincere dining to a growing neighborhood grateful for options.

And options is exactly what Minneapolis' Downtown East needs. Located at the corner of Third and Washington, Eastside is perfectly situated. And not just for its surrounding residents either, particularly those filling the luxury apartments above the restaurant in Latitude 45. My first gasp of delight upon entering the restaurant was the realization that it is walking distance to the Guthrie.

Aesthetically, the restaurant has as much depth and complexity as its menu. Simply put, it's gorgeous. An inspired mix of industrial, modern, and vaguely Craftsman. The tile floors alone will mesmerize you while you wait for your food.

Speaking of food, shall we talk menu? Let's. After all, that's why you're here, no?

A couple weeks back on a crisp fall weekday afternoon, a couple

friends and I had the chance to explore Eastside. Our late afternoon nosh started just as the happy hour crowd began to bubble in.

First to the table was the tuna poke. There's no better way, in my opinion, to start a meal. Fresh buttery tuna and rich avocado dance around in your mouth with a hint of tart and fire brought by grapefruit and Fresno peppers. If your taste buds were asleep after a boring bag lunch, welcome back to flavor in 3D.

On to the wood-roasted carrot salad and a chance to taste actual fall. Yes, the season. Chef Remy isn't just adamant about his menu reflecting the neighborhood, but also the change of seasons. The roasted carrot salad pays homage to this philosophy and deliciously so. Nothing says autumn like the sweet bite of roasted root vegetables.

Next up, calamari. Whenever I see it on a menu, I order it. I'm not quite sure why. Typically, I'm underwhelmed. Eastside is not typical and underwhelming doesn't seem to be in their vocabulary. It's prepared à la plancha, tenderly grilled to release all its seafaring flavor. A welcome change from the typically overfried rubber bands that wind up on my plate. The pistachios were also a delightful surprise.

The main event at this meal was the Snake River flat iron steak. Eastside isn't a steakhouse, but you know the guy behind Burch isn't going to let you down. And he doesn't. Frankly, this steak rivals anything you'd

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Eastside's bar with cocktail program by Dan Oskey.

get at Burch. Or any place in town. It's that good. It's paired with scalloped potatoes that you'll wish came in a double order. And an order to go.

Along with the steak, I highly recommend you get an order of Chef Remy's fried wild rice. It's comfort food at its best. And most Minnesotan. Which makes it just that much more comforting. Don't miss the pork shoulder with curry caramel sauce. You heard me: curry caramel sauce.

Speaking of comfort, I'd be remiss if I skipped dessert. Although, I did. At some point this month, I thought a 30-day no-sugar challenge sounded like a great idea. Luckily for you, my dinner companions weren't on the same self-imposed restriction. And they couldn't stop talking about the pear tart with its lavender-infused white chocolate pastry cream. Seriously, I'm going back post-challenge for the pear tart. And the maple pecan pie.

For the cocktail-inclined, you'll be



happy to know local distiller Dan Oskey of Tattersall helped craft a beverage menu as playful as the food. Sherry cocktails are a signature highlight, designed to pair perfectly with your meal. Also unique to Eastside, the cider pours are as fun as they are fantastic.

If you've read this far, you're already planning your first trip to Eastside. Truly, you'll be glad you did. I'll be back. There's a fried chicken sandwich on a pretzel bun that's been calling my name ever since I saw it on the menu.

It is neither cliché nor hyperbole to say Eastside has it all. It really does. Great location with a wonderfully inviting, thoughtful menu and a staff clearly passionate about offering guests a memorable meal.

Embarrassment of riches, indeed. ■

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The Missing Lynx

Wednesday is magazine day. *Time*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *ESPN the Magazine*, and *Sports Illustrated*. It's Christmas every week!

Opening my mailbox this past Wednesday, I glimpsed the familiar blue of Minnesota basketball gracing *SI*'s cover. Was it to be? A well-deserved Lynx cover story?! Alas, I was fooled. In a slap of bold-faced sexism, *SI* chose instead to highlight the Lynx' male counterparts just days after the Lynx National Championship win. The Timberwolves were the coverboys.

Flipping through the pages, not even a *mention* of our three-time WNBA Championship winning team was to be found. How could this be? Did *SI* really include two pages on Lamar Odom's drug-fueled sexcapades, when he hasn't even played a game since 2013? There's TMZ for that. Clearly, there was a missing link here.

It's not just *Sports Illustrated*. An avid sports fan, I have most sports apps on my phone, which incessantly provide me with need-to-know-now information such as "Marcus Mariota Ruled Out For Sunday vs. Falcons" and "UFC Reinstates Jon Jones Effective Immediately" and also allows me to "follow" my favorite teams, streams and players. Packers. Check. Twins. Check. NFL News. Check. A-Rod. Check.

No option for WNBA News. And again, the missing Lynx.

A walk through Target's Fan Shop displays Twins gear, Wild gear, Vikings gear, (even Packers gear in enemy territory), Timberwolves gear, and what can't I find? Guess. Perhaps Target.com? Target's a proud Minnesota company! Timberwolves onesies, T-shirts, jerseys, lamps, barstools, and tables. A search for Minnesota Lynx: No Results Found.

How can this be? Three-peat champions. One championship title every other year since 2011 to be exact. The word "dynasty" is floating around. The Lynx drew 18,933 fans to Target Center for Championship Game 5, including Teddy Bridgewater and Kyle Rudolph of the Minnesota Vikings and Minnesota's very own



Photo by Sophia Hantzes

reclusive rocker, Prince. Maya Moore is being touted as the Michael Jordan of women's basketball, making history with every game. Swishing three-point buzzer beaters in the WNBA finals while my eight-year-old nephew jumps wildly on the couch.

And still, the sports industry has yet to catch on, and more surprisingly, yet to capitalize. The devoted fan base, sometimes raucously vocal, is also incredibly diverse. The little old lady in the Lynx jersey receives some of the heartiest cheers when caught busting a move on the big screen. Kids of all ages join Maya Moore for post-game dance celebrations at center court and eagerly slap hands with the friendliest of stars. Because, to their credit, for as talented and successful as the Lynx are, they're still wholly accessible and humble. Maya Moore still grabs a mic and sincerely thanks the fans after every game. I'll keep waiting for LeBron James to do that. In an era where many sports idols might also be less-than-stellar role models, the women of the WNBA give kids something worthwhile to aspire to.

So what's the problem? Why do the Lynx and the WNBA as a whole continue to be left out of mainstream sports media? Perhaps the powers-that-be haven't done their market research. I took it upon myself to do my own, in the form of texting my nieces and nephew, and young cousin, all of who have been to a Lynx game this championship season, to glean some consumer insights into why the

fans care for the brand and what their underlying mindsets and motivations might be. Highest quality research, I tell you.

Kylar, age five, and Adah, age six both agreed that the "dancing" was a draw. One point for accessibility.

Drew, my eight-year-old, multi-sport athlete nephew, lover of the Vikings and fantasy football, said "Because, they won, duh!" The Lynx are the most successful of the Minnesota pro teams. One point for competence.

I asked him if he remembered any of the players. "Serena Williams?" Um, close, buddy. Glad you know who she is, though. He then

quickly remembered Maya Moore and Seimone Augustus. One point for notability.

And finally, Zoe, age ten. "I loved watching the Lynx game because it inspired me to be the best female player I can be in any sport, including [in my] life goals. I watched them play and all bring different parts of the team and come together as one... I believe that all girls have the power to do anything and that we can make our own decisions in life and we need to remember that no one can control us or make decisions for us and we all need to stick together." Wow. Ten points for positive influence and meaningful impact.

All the kids now have Lynx gear and wear it proudly (no thanks to you, Target!). As do the majority of the fans in attendance (I told my sister-in-law when she was looking for me in Hubert's pregame that I was the lesbian in the Lynx shirt. Apparently that didn't help.).

There is a great, untapped market. The fans exist; the love is strong; the talent is dominant. The Lynx are not missing to whom they matter the most, and ultimately that trumps all. They truly are Minnesota's best kept secret. So *Sports Illustrated*, get with the program. These athletes rock. But above all, to the players and coaching staff: Congratulations on an amazing season. It was an honor to watch you play and we can't wait for next year. ■



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Grand Rapids skyline sunset. Photo courtesy of Experience Grand Rapids

Grand Rapids

GRAND SLAM

If this town were in our home state, we modest Minnesotans might call it Above Average Rapids. But, in Michigan, they call it Grand.

Q: Why? Three guesses: 1) Grand Rapids is big (Michigan's second largest city), yet its compact downtown is easy to meander; 2) It's terrific, boasting a vibrant urban landscape; 3) It's situated aside the rapids of the Grand River, leading to Lake Michigan 30 miles away.

A: All of the above. And it's at its grandest during ArtPrize, the annual 19-day celebration in which 1,800 artists, from every state and around the world, are paired with close to 180 display venues within a three-mile radius. ArtPrize salutes art of all stripes: paintings, sculptures, installations, and time-based projects, such as video, ranging from traditional to decidedly unorthodox (think: plastic cups taped to a chain-link fence). Art spills out of nearly every edifice, from the city's formal art museums to hotel lobbies, restaurants, office spaces, bars, and laundromats — even the police station.

The festival, launched seven years ago, was conceived “to surprise, delight, amaze, confound, and infuriate” the public, says its founder, and it delivers. Voyeurs, numbering over 400,000, range from grade-school classes to seniors from nursing homes and roving bands of teens. Joe Six Pack jostles the Mayor, checking venues off their lists. And every visitor is invited to vote for a favorite, who (along with a winner chosen by a jury of experts) walks off with a grand prize of \$200,000. Live TV coverage pre-empts prime time, and conversations in bars and restaurants bristle with “Have you seen....?” and “What did you think of....?”

My personal faves ran the gamut from meat-locker cuts fashioned of fabric to a photo essay exploring the struggle of gender identity; from bikes decorated in Native American symbols to connect kids to their culture to a camper vehicle parked on a bridge (walk right in); and a shimmering glass-ornament forest in the lobby of the grande dame Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, aside the river walk.

But art in Grand Rapids isn't limited to an autumn celebration. Year-round, downtown's Grand Rapids Art Museum and the Urban Institute

for Contemporary Art (UICA) join Kendall Art College's displays aside scads of indie galleries and crafts emporiums such as the hive in the MoDiv Building, where Trovati Studio features crochet pig hats, recycled cement bags as purses, and chipmunk slippers, along with glam home accessories, while nearby Madcap Coffee helps keep creative juices flowing.

History buffs head for the Public Museum on the riverbank to wander through the Streets of Old Grand Rapids wing or learn about the lifestyle of the original Anishinaabe Nation, whose burial mounds rise nearby. Aside it, the Gerald Ford Presidential Museum executes vivid reminders of the issues this president faced when stepping up after Nixon's resignation focusing on reforming the CIA and de-bugging the White House post-Watergate, then what he called “the saddest hour of my time in the White House”: the evacuation of Saigon as the U.S. Army's presence in Vietnam disintegrated.

But the best of the best, the axis of culture and beauty, lies a short ride from downtown: the 158-acre Frederik Meijer Sculpture Gardens. A tram tour creeps through forests shining with creations by bold-name artists: one of Deborah Butterworth's horses; “Iron Tree” by Chinese dissident Ai Wei Wei; a Rodin; a Henry Moore; a Claes Oldenburg; the huge red signature work by Alexander Liberman; Louise Bourgeois' own signature, a mega-spider; and the photo op to surpass all photo ops, a giant — giant! — Trojan Horse constructed from the unbuilt-in-his-lifetime design of Leonardo da Vinci. Also: an indoor sculpture gallery (think glassblower Chihuly), a Japanese garden, and a tropical greenhouse.

All of these works make me thirst for Grand Rapids' other major art form: beer. Called Beer Town USA, sudsters can belly up to its 13 downtown breweries, including Founders, the world's largest, where (with the help of dedicated friends) I sampled all 24 of its brews, starting with best-selling All Day IPA. Downtown's newest, HopCap, boasts 150 taps, including a slew from Michigan.

Want fries with that? Spuds — and other yummy edibles from barbe-



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Deborah Butterworth's iconic horse in Frederik Meijer Sculpture Garden; ArtPrize exhibit: bikes with Native American designs to connect N.A. kids to their culture; Exhibit in Grand Rapids' ArtPrize annual festival. Photos by Carla Waldemar

cue to sushi, maple syrup to gelato — get star treatment at the modern, modish Downtown Market, sporting half a dozen restaurant counters as well as purveyors of meat, fish, cheese, and more.

Or leave the cooking to the pros and head to Wolfgang Puck's brand-new venture, The Kitchen, debuting at the Amway, featuring crab cakes in pesto vinaigrette, kung pao lettuce wraps, and a superb tuna tartare as well as signature pizzas and pastas and a superior schnitzel. The Amway's rooftop Cygnus27 restaurant offers food as stellar as the view, from its best-selling grilled corn salad, to winners like short ribs in Founders Pale Ale; green mole scallops paired with carnitas; and salmon in poblano pesto.

Across the street at the J.W. Marriott, its superior dining spot, Six. One.Six, offers a killer kale salad followed by plates to share (if you can bear to), including scallops in sweet corn cream; roasted marrow bones; and short ribs with celeriac-caper slaw. Climax the feast with pumpkin-spiced bread pudding sided with crème fraîche gelato or the chocolate madcap, which earns its name.

Cross the street in the opposite direction and you'll reach Reserve, housed in a former bank, that banks its reputation on monumental Monte Cristo and barbecue pork sandwiches, sided, if you're smart (or defying your doctor) by pork fat fries. For a nightcap, slink into the speakeasy deluxe called the Lumber Baron Bar back at the Amway to sip a classy Scotch or Bourbon.

For further information, visit www.ExperienceGR.com. ■

ENDNOTE

The Advocate has named Grand Rapids "one of the gayest cities" in the land. Who knew? Well, the boys who visit its clubs, for sure, including The Apartment Lounge (dancing, bingo); Rumours Nightclub (drag shows, go-go boys); Rockwell/Republic; Diversions Video Bar (karaoke); and Grand Rapids Renegades for GLBT line dancing.

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AMERICA'S FIRST GAY MARRIAGE, 44 YEARS LATER

Jack Baker and Michael McConnell sit at their solid oak dining table in their south Minneapolis home. An advance copy of Michael's memoir (to be released in January) sits in front of them. The memoir, titled *The Wedding Heard*

'Round the World, details their love story and commitment to each other that led to the United States' first gay wedding... in 1971.

Long before the fight over same-sex marriage took over national media, long before

Kentucky clerks were being arrested for denying gay couples' marriage licenses, Jack Baker and Michael McConnell decided to find a way to marry.

The year was 1967. Homosexuality was still classified as a disorder, sodomy was illegal

in nearly every state, and most gay men and lesbians lived in fearful secrecy.


"As you may know," Michael says, reaching his hand out to me, "[it] was a time for gay people that was pretty scary. Most people were clos-

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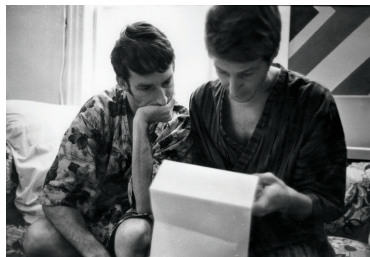
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(From left) **Applying for a marriage license.** Photo by R. Bertrand Heine courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society; **Reviewing legal documents in the early 1970s.** Photo by Charlotte Brooks; **Jack at the first FREE dance at the University of Minnesota, 1970.** Photo by Paul Hagen; **Marching in the 1974 Gay Pride Parade, Minneapolis.** Courtesy of the Jean-Nikolaus Tretter Collection in GLBT Studies, University of Minnesota Libraries

eted. Most people were fearful. Most people were even uncomfortable in their own families." But, Michael confides, neither he nor Jack lived a secret life.

It was a closeted time, but as someone who came out to his family at 19 years old, Michael wasn't afraid or hiding from anyone and had a supportive family to back him up. Quite the contrary, he knew who he was. From the age of 14, eyeing young men in his father's barbershop, Michael dreamed of living "happily ever after" with a partner. So when Jack proposed moving in together, Michael challenged him. "If we're going to do this," he replied, "you have to find a way for us to get married."

They had met the previous year at a Halloween barn party in Oklahoma. It was a time when no one talked about being gay. It wasn't in the press, and if it was it was something ugly and awful. The cops raided bars (if there were bars). Michael says, "In Oklahoma, which was a dry state, the only way you could drink liquor was to belong to a private club and bring your own bottle to the club."

According to him, there were only a few gay clubs and the only way you got into those clubs was to come up to the door, peek through, and if they knew you, you got in, or if you were with someone they knew, you got in. By those hidden standards, Michael and Jack considered themselves pretty far advanced in terms of being out.

"By 1967 when Jack asked me to commit," Michael says, "I had already been with someone for four years, and had learned about relationships, had learned about the broader gay community, not only locally but across the country. And so we never

had the shame, we never had the guilt, we never had the fear that most gay people had."

For Michael, who had the support of his family, and Jack, whose parents died when he was young leaving him an orphan at a Catholic boarding school, there was no need to hide who they were. In fact, Michael's mom was overjoyed by their relationship. Jack came along after Michael had broken up with his first lover, which sent him into a deep depression, and Jack was the guy to pull him out of it.

"My mom and dad were thrilled that I was finally seeing someone," Michael says. "As my mom said, 'Michael, you have got to stop this, you have got to get out of this house and go get with your friends!' When Jack showed up, they really liked him. There was this guy, he's a serious kind of guy, and he's an engineer and he's responsible and really polite. They really wanted to see this happen."

And so their relationship blossomed to the point of discussing marriage. In 1969, Jack decided it was time to go to law school to figure out how to make it possible. At the University of Minnesota's law school, Jack got involved on campus. He joined and became the first president of the gay student group known as FREE (Fight Repression of Erotic Expression), which gave him the platform to demand equal marriage rights, among other things, for gay people. The other FREE members were undergraduates and, for the most part, were happy to support Jack's activist vision.

"Because we had lived free and openly, we had a different view of the world and felt much more comfortable about where

we needed to go and what we needed to do," Michael says. "Most gay people at that time were looking for companionship and friends and just being with others who felt the same way you did. The isolation and the fear really took its toll on people."

But Michael and Jack had already found each other; they had already overcome the feelings of isolation that so many gay men and women felt at the time. They saw a bigger picture.

"We began to talk about those things that were really important that we felt were for the bigger change that would come to society," Michael shares. "And we knew that marriage would be the thing that would do that because it is the bedrock of society. It defines relationships, it determines what rights and privileges are passed down in society through the law, it works in distribution or conservation of wealth, it deals with children — a whole host of things. We knew this would have a huge impact. But more importantly for us, personally, it was an important part of our commitment that this was something that we wanted for ourselves. We wanted to have the same respect and the same kind of relationship that members of the rest of our family did."

As a law student, Jack was getting an understanding for how the law and politics worked, and how to use that to his advantage. "One of the things that you learn in politics is one of the things the politicians like to do is they say 'go slow' and that really means that you beg for whatever equality they're willing to give you," he says. "And we just said 'Absolutely not; it's full and absolute equality, no exceptions, no excuses.'"

With the gay movement gaining speed, the men decided the culture was ripe for them to take action. "You know the coasts had nothing over Minneapolis," Michael says. "This was a center. This truly was a center during that time. And Minnesotans are so modest and nice, you know, we don't want to brag too much, but one of the first national gay conferences was held right here on the West Bank."

Indeed, gay people and their allies were demanding equality nationwide. With groups like the Mattachine Society in Chicago and the Phoenix Society in Kansas City, activism wasn't reserved to the coasts. Michael says that the East Coast likes to claim Stonewall as the beginning of the gay movement — it wasn't. "There were many other things going on at that time," he says. "People kicked closet doors open so loud you could hear them echoing across the whole country."

Against that homophile movement backdrop, Jack began his research at the law school and discovered that marriage between two persons of the same sex was not forbidden by state statutes. So they applied. In 1970, Jack and Michael became the first same-sex couple known to apply for a marriage license. Turned down by Hennepin County, they fought to the United States Supreme Court, where they lost their case in a one-sentence dismissal that has reverberated in federal courts and played an indirect role in pushing same-sex marriage to the high court this year.

"They did not deny the claim, they dismissed it; there is a legal distinction there," Jack says. "And basically they dismissed it 'for want of a substantial federal

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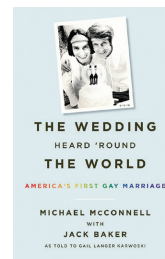


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(From left) McConnell and Baker. Photo by Melissa Davidson, Studio threesixty5; June 2015: Love is law! The court's ruling included this note: Minnesota's 1972 decision in "Baker v. Nelson must be and now is overruled." Photo by Angela Jimenez; Book cover. Image courtesy of University of Minnesota Press

question,' which in plain English is 'now is not the time; we will answer that question but not now.' So it came back this year in 2015 and the court finally answered the very question that we posed. So the whole issue on same-sex marriage began here and ended here. So we're quite proud of that. That's the difference between then and now. It only took forty-something years to get an answer to the question, but it was the correct question, correct answer."

Of course, at the time the Supreme Court dismissed their case, the couple did not give up. With some sleight of hand involving a legal change to a gender-neutral name, they obtained a marriage license in another county, and in 1971, in white bell-bottom pantsuits and macramé headbands, they exchanged vows before a Methodist pastor and a dozen guests in a friend's apartment. Their three-tiered wedding cake was topped by two plastic grooms, which a friend supplied by splitting two bride-and-groom figurines.

Ever since, they have maintained that theirs was the country's first lawful same-sex wedding. The state and federal governments have yet to grant formal recognition, but no court has invalidated their 1971 license either.

Michael and Jack are quick to tell you that they always believed that they would live to see marriage equality nationwide, they just assumed it would be "by the end of the decade." Well, 1980 came and went without getting any closer to that goal, so the two men decided to step out of the public eye and allow someone else to take the reins.

"We had become a lightning

rod that was, we felt, holding things back," Michael says. "We felt it would be best if we could move aside and let new people come in, develop their leadership skills, and advocate for themselves."

The question begs to be asked: why, after so many years and court cases not going in their favor, did the couple continue to fight? Where did they get the courage and passion to keep going?

"My parents always told me, 'You are as good as anyone else,' and that's where my feelings about full equality come from," Michael says.

For Jack, his passion and courage to keep fighting come from the commitment he made to Michael. "We were committed to an agenda and so there's no point in stopping midstream on our agenda, so we just stood firm on it," he says. "Once you bite the bullet, you're just going to have to fight."

Now, more than three decades after stepping out of the national spotlight, the two men are preparing for the release of Michael's memoir, effectively placing them back in the public eye.

"Every year there will be a new batch of 14-year-olds and they all ask the same question: How can I find Mr. or Mrs. Right?" Jack says. "And that's what that memoir is aimed at, to try and address that question for young adults, for teenagers."

More than just the story of how the couple met, applied for a marriage license, and took that battle to the Supreme Court, readers will also discover the couple's other forms of activism. From fighting for job security for gay people to taking on the Air Force, Michael's memoir details just how far they are willing to

fight for themselves and the man they love.

The memoirs became an idea after the recently retired couple began organizing the boxes of history — documents, letters, buttons, and so much more — that they had been collecting over the years that was piling up in boxes in their basement.

The couple have been very forthcoming about their court cases and the public life they lead, but, as Michael says, they hadn't told their love story.

Here, Jack chimes in. "And we were just kind of sitting it out and waiting to see what everyone would say about what was going on and an awful lot of people were claiming credit for everything they didn't do," he says. "And so we actually have the final say. Now, this is what ACTUALLY did happen on same-sex marriage and where it actually did start. And the fact of the matter is that the bragging rights on same-sex marriage belong to the University of Minnesota, not on the east coast or the west coast or anyplace else. They're right here, and it's all documented, and it's all in the book."

Michael adds, "The basics are here. The truth is here. What we did is here. It's documented. They can't claim that it began in Hawaii or Massachusetts or someplace else. This is where it began, and we have the facts and they're sitting right over in the archives at the University of Minnesota." He's referring to the recent donation of the couple's documents and artifacts to the Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection in Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Studies. Their collection of letters, articles, and correspondence with GLBT activists around the world is now on display and open for


researchers, students, and activists to further their research.

Indeed, the forthcoming memoir details much more than was part of their previous public persona, sharing pieces of their story that haven't been told before. "By 1980, when we decided to get off the public stage," Michael says, "when we would share those pieces they would either be ignored or they'd be used to prop up some other viewpoint."

"We're telling our story, our way," Jack adds. "And the reason we waited was we could see the story of marriage equality was approaching its apex; a decision was going to be made. Now's the time to tell that story, because now we can tell the full story."

With marriage equality now a nationwide reality, the logical question is what's next? According to Jack and Michael, the activists of today will set their sights on a new goal. That goal looks to be furthering civil rights in the form of housing and employment discrimination for the GLBT community. But whatever the next cause is that rallies activists together, Jack has one bit of advice for those seeking change: "If you don't stand tall and defend yourself, no one else will either. You've got to advocate for yourself." ■

Michael's memoir, The Wedding Heard 'Round the World: America's First Gay Marriage, is set to be released in January 2016. A launch party, complete with a Q&A session with Jack Baker and Michael McConnell, will take place January 26, 2016 at 7 p.m. at the Elmer L. Andersen Library on the University of Minnesota campus. For now, preorder your copy of the memoir from the University of Minnesota Press at www.upress.umn.edu.



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2016 Mazda CX-3



One would presume that the number of new subcompact crossovers being introduced these days would translate onto the streets of our communities.

Well...honestly, it's hit or miss. Around here, some of the more established models made their presence already on our streets. The Mitsubishi Outlander Sport is a favorite in our community, with the Nissan Juke running a good second. There are growing legions of Honda HR-V, Chevrolet Trax, Buick Encore, Jeep Renegade, and Fiat 500X owners that are joining the Outlander Sport/Juke crowd.

All of the above listed vehicles are definitely choices dictated by consumers looking for maximum utility in a small package. However, there is another population of automotive consumers these vehicles need to attract: enthusiasts. These are the people with a Mazda MX-5 Miata in storage during the winter. They care more about drivability on a level where good handling is not enough to whet their appetite for adventure. For them, a mere subcompact crossover is not enough.

For them, there is the new 2016 Mazda CX-3. But, is it the one for them? Or, is it really for the rest of the consumer population?

The CX-3 arrives as a solution for those living in urban enclaves needing a sportier solution to a problem: getting around town with more than a few grocery bags in the back. Yet, this solution must be able to park in tight spaces on the street, even if it is down the block from the front door of your place.

The first solution is to make the CX-3 look the part. It takes an interpretation of the "KODO — Soul of Motion" design language seen on almost every Mazda so far. This interpretation resulted in a long nose, about the size of the Mazda3, yet with a long overhang from the front wheels. Certainly there is enough front end between you and potential obstacles, and there is an assurance of safety by doing so. The roofline is sporty, but not upright in the rear end. It looks good, but there is a drawback to having a roofline of that degree of slant; however, the hatch opens wide for better loading, despite the high loading height above the bumper.

Our Touring tester had smaller 16-inch wheels, which are great to avoid wheel-curb rash. They are also great for winter driving, since the higher sidewall is better to get through the snow. The front doors are large and open wide, though the rear doors are amenable for rear seat access, despite being a bit smaller than some of its competitors. In all, the CX-3 is handsome, though some people might be picky on the long front end and other details.

Mazda has been stepping it up on interior design, and it shows inside of the CX-3. The instrumentation focuses on a center speedometer dial with two digital "wings." The left screen offers a tachometer and gear position, while the right shows fuel level and trip information. Pretty straightforward and understandable. The rest of the dashboard falls along the same theme, mostly seen on other recent Mazda models with a combination of circular and in-line vent ports, lower climate controls, and a small tablet-like screen for the infotainment system. This falls down into a center console that has the knob controllers for the tablet-like screen above (also known as Mazda Connect) and a short transmission lever.

Luckily, the CX-3 gets the improved Mazda Connect system now seen on several Mazda models. The larger knob controls everything from radio tuning to point of interest searches for the navigation system. This system offers SiriusXM, full Pandora integration, a solid navigation system, and Bluetooth connectivity for the phone and music file playback. Bose provides seven speakers for clean sound throughout the cabin.

This Touring model that I have been testing has leatherette seating in black with a muted medium shade of red for trim pieces around the cabin. The red accenting was OK, but I had some questions about it considering it is wearing a blue exterior color. Colors aside, the seats are fine with a balance of comfort and support. It is not a tall vehicle, so headroom for taller people may need some adjustment when equipped with the moonroof. Rear seats are comfortable for two to three people, but there is not enough leg room for tall people. Four average sized adults would have a fun time inside the CX-3 at best.

The cargo hold is at best adequate to use. With the rear seats up, it only has 12.4 cubic feet to spare. Fold down the rear seats, and there is 44.5 cubic feet available. This was put to the test twice: carrying two sets of bags for the run home from a regional media event outside of Chicago to Madison, Wisconsin and to haul a plethora of trophies for a car meet one of my outlets was co-sponsoring. For the luggage issue, I needed to fold down one part of the rear seat to accommodate at least my bags. As for the trophies, it did carry the weight without hesitation. The CX-3 has a payload rating of 1,038 pounds.

The name of the game for the CX-3 is Skyactiv technology. It starts with the original Skyactiv engine, a 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine. In the CX-3, this engine puts out 146 horsepower, which is adequate for this class. A six-speed automatic transmission is the only gearbox available on the CX-3, and it is a good choice for this engine. This tester had all-wheel drive,



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which I hoped to test out as the atmosphere started to feel a bit “snapped.” In all, this driveline works fine in the CX-3 keeping less than 3,000 pounds of subcompact crossover motivated over its extended test, including the haul from outside of Chicago to Madison and back up to the Twin Cities.

The ride was simply fine. The suspension absorbed what it could from most surfaces and was strong enough to handle the extra cargo of car meet trophies when it had to. Although, I did find a lot of road noise coming from the tires and the road below, even when the CX-3 was empty. Handling was just as expected from a crossover, which trended on the soft side. Roll was present in the turns, but not enough to cause alarm for occupants. Steering was OK, though a sharper action and a tighter turning radius would make it perfect. On-center feel was good and turning action was solid. Brakes were fantastic with good stops in both normal and panic situations.

For the CX-3, Mazda claims it could get up to 35 MPG. In reality, I got an average of 29.4 MPG. No matter how you look at it, that’s still decent for this kind of vehicle.

A CX-3 Sport with front-wheel drive is priced from \$19,960. This load-

ed all-wheel drive Touring model came with a sticker price of \$26,150. Lately, I’ve found that even subcompact crossovers are getting a bit spenny. This is a concern, especially when they are supposed to be “affordable.” Perhaps it is all relative considering the price of new vehicles today, including the most popular models.

Now that the subcompact crossover segment is growing, there are a few considerations to take away from the CX-3. Though enthusiasts will love this vehicle, one wonders if it is just the name they are attracted to rather than the vehicle itself. There is something behind the Mazda, any Mazda, that enables enthusiasts to get the most out of their vehicles; however, this should not exclude the rest of us. For that, the Mazda makes a lot of sense when selecting one from this segment.

But this is not about making sense. It is about the ability to live in an urban enclave (or anywhere we live) and have the right vehicle to (a) get through winter, (b) haul more than a few bags of groceries when we have to shop, and (c) have something small enough to manage traffic better. For those criteria, the Mazda CX-3 makes a lot of sense. It is the best in the class. ■



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HOME & GARDEN

WINTER

BY SHANE LUECK

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It's no secret: adding artwork to your home is the easiest (and best) way to personalize your space. What hangs on your wall is a reflection of you; it tells your guests a little bit about you, your style, and creates conversation. From paintings to photography, the Twin Cities has no shortage of artists for homeowners to choose from. It's just a matter of finding one whose style matches your own.

Whether you're drawn toward realism or the abstract, landscapes or the more intimate human body, Twin Cities artists are here to meet your needs.

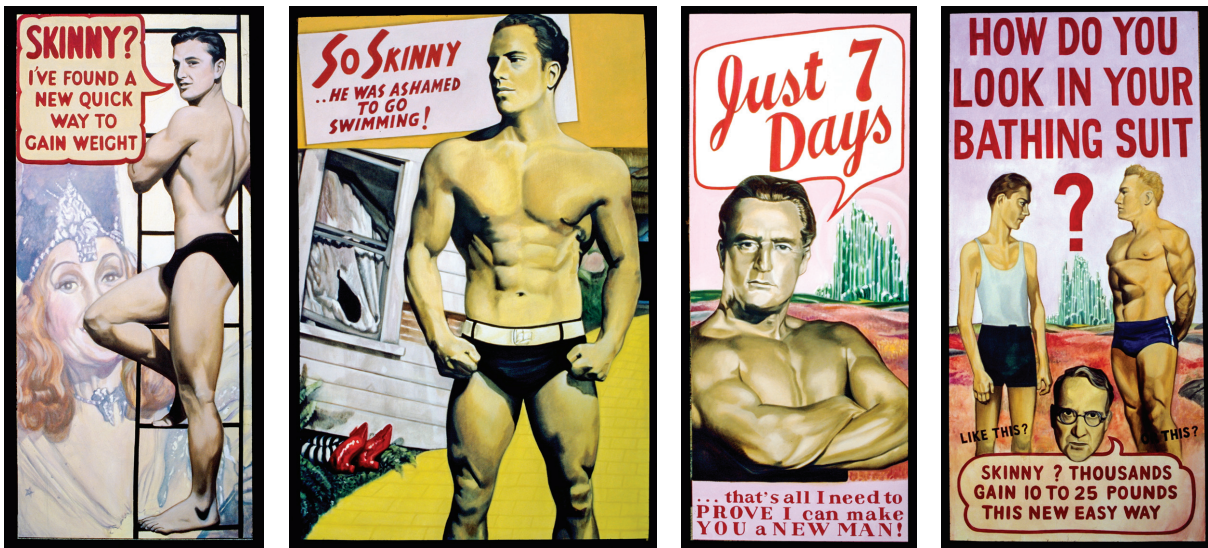
Take Matt Lillegard, for example. Working mainly in oils on canvas (with the occasional acrylics), Lillegard finds his inspiration mainly in popular culture. "I quite often draw images and inspiration from movies or television and advertising," he says. "I guess I am a

realist for sure. I am very image-driven."

He continues, "There are usually images or ideas in my head — a backlog of them, really — that are just waiting to get out on canvas. I can say currently there are at least 10 paintings I can see clearly. I just have to do the work. I guess my [creative] process is not mysterious in that way. I usually know exactly where I'm going before I start."

Lillegard was always interested in art from a very early age, draw-

MATT LILLEGARD



Previous page: Paintings by Dan Raphael (L to R): Matador; Solemn.
Above: Paintings by Matt Lillegard (clockwise from top): Blue Kiss; How Do You Look; Just 7 Days II; So Skinny; Skinny.

ing obsessively as a child. Surprisingly, he admits that a lot of people don't even know that he paints. He confesses it was the only thing he really wanted to study in college, where he received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in painting. Now he gets to paint in the comfort of his home that he and his husband share ("the dogs like it that way").

If Lillegard's realist aesthetic speaks to buyers, he has completed works for sale but also does commissioned work. He's done a number of portraits and has also been commissioned to do specific paintings from series that he's been working on.

But anyone interested in Lillegard's work take note: you need a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 46 ➔

DAN RAPHAEL



Paintings by Dan Raphael (clockwise from top): Duchess; Toro; Clytemnestra.

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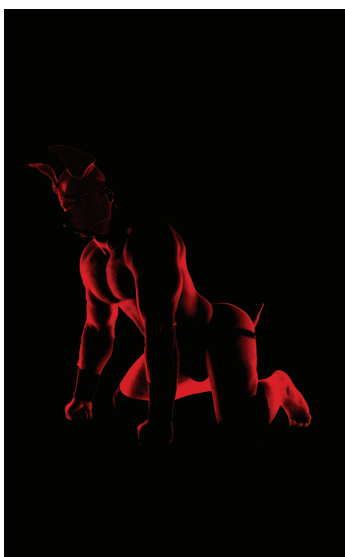
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RYAN COIT



Photography by Ryan Coit (clockwise from top): On The Cross; I spit it out; Pup Tank; Dancer.

good-sized wall if you want to hang one of his paintings. “For those that have never seen my work, I tend to work big,” he says. “I like painting people and I like life-size or larger quite often.”

In contrast to Lillegard’s life-like paintings, Dan Raphael has infused his previous experience with the watercolor medium and its

characteristics into his current work with oil paint. Of his art, Raphael says, “I can say I like paint that shows emotion over detail or realism. I want to feel something when I look at art. And when looking closely at a work I admire, I don’t mind seeing it come apart under scrutiny. Seeing the strings of the puppet are part of the poetry.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 50 ➔

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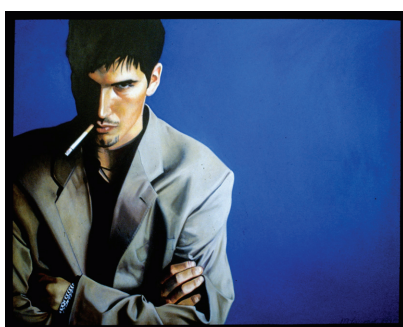


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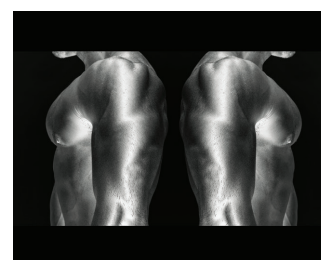
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MATT LILLEGARD



RYAN COIT



Paintings by Matt Lillegard (clockwise from left): *The Swimmers*; *Blue*; *Jill Sees Strangler Victim*. Photography by Ryan Coit (clockwise from left): *Boy/Sir*; *Reflective Muse*; *Ready*.

Raphael says he's always been creative, and certainly lost in imagination. For him, drawing led to painting, and he finds it quite useful to slow things down, likening it to a meditating process.

"At some point I decided art was an avenue of expression well suited for me," he says. "Artists from the past, primarily the Impressionists, have influenced my line of sight. Things that inspire me are design and architecture, both present and from the past. From there I freeze frame moments that I think would make an interesting painting. Then they sort of become something of their own volition. I have found it better not to force them."

This creative process is exactly why Raphael works from home. "I have always needed to keep the work close to me," he says. "When a work is in progress it amounts to many episodes of walking away and then happening upon it later. That has to happen where I live."

How do artists decorate their own homes? For Raphael, it's a bit of opposites attract. "I enjoy the process of portraying the illusion of three dimensions through a two-dimensional medium," he shares. "There is something ancient about that. However, when I am drawn to own something from another artist, it tends to be sculptural. I guess that is a medium that fills a void."

Which just goes to show, art is subjective — what attracts one person will deter another. Subjectivity is something that Raphael embraces in his own work.

"At a glance, I think my art is a concerted effort to communicate," he says. "It's not really finished until someone has looked at it and drawn their own impression. It may or may not have anything to do with my original intent."

With winter quickly approaching, homeowners looking to love what they see on their walls are open to decide what works for them. Do you want the art inside your home to reflect what's going on outside? Or do you want to be reminded of a warmer time of year?

For Raphael, it's the latter.

"In my living room, I have a painting I did of Monet's gardens," he says. "Birch trees that lined his property in Giverny, France. Everything was lush and green. No matter how cold it is outside, I never

tire of looking at it. Art can fill that sort of space and feeling like nothing else, no matter the season."

Digital photographer Ryan Coit's art choices in his home also reflect emotions rather than the season. The photographer, who also works with cut paper and digital processing, says, "For me art is an emotional stimulant. I like to have images that excite me, stimulate me. Art that makes me happy and inspires me to get motivated each day. I do have a few pieces that have more somber themes and these images are usually reflections of the past. As a reminder of struggles overcome."

Those struggles he refers to have deeply impacted his own artwork. According to Coit, as he has evolved as an artist, he's realized how much of his past has an influence on his work. "I was raised very conservatively in a deeply religious family," he says. "My photography is an outlet for my queer sexuality. It is a place I can express my desires, questions, and fears. A lot of my art has my personal battle interlaced in it — my struggle with the blending of homosexuality and religion. It took me a very long time to find real confidence in being a gay man."

With that struggle in his past, it shouldn't come as a surprise that there is a bit of a religious influence throughout his pieces, yet he says that is something that a lot of people don't realize. But even without that knowledge, it's still easy to appreciate the nature of Coit's photography, a style that he says has changed dramatically over the years.

"I have always loved the classic look of black and white photography," he says. "A little over a year ago I went to an exhibit in LA and was so inspired. I realized how much I was boxing my creativity in by not using color and also never showing full nudity. When I came home I got right to work on the 'Masks III' show where I made it my goal to not care if it was going to be 'too much.' That was really when my style changed, letting me really express what I was feeling and trying to say through images."

The photographer you see today started long ago. Coit loved the arts for as long as he can remember — his mother was a ceramic painter, which got him painting at a young age. His father had a nice

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camera and that eventually sparked his interest.

"I remember saving up money from my first job when I was 15 to buy my first camera," he shares. "I used to go through rolls and rolls of film just wandering around taking photos of anything and everything. Once I was in my college photography program, I realized my passion for photographing people."

His affinity for photographing the human form is also present in the art that he is attracted to by other artists. "I love work from Mapplethorpe and Tom of Finland," he says. "They are huge inspirations to me, and I think at times you can see that in my photographs. I love drawings of the male figure. I have such respect for artists that paint and draw."

All of these artists' work can be purchased directly from the artists themselves. To stay up to date on their gallery showings, schedule viewings, or to purchase work, reach out to them on their websites. ■

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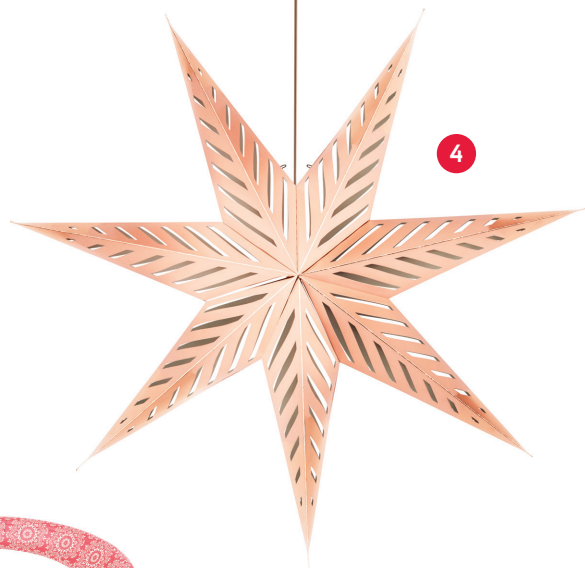


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The holidays have the potential to be the most wonderful time of the year: friends and family all gathered around the table, sharing stories, laughing, and creating memories. But the holidays also have the potential to be the most dreaded time of the year. Tame your crazy uncle and stop any nagging in-laws dead in their tracks with these fantastic holiday entertaining tips from Ikea.

It makes sense that more pliable materials create a softer aesthetic. Use that logic at the dinner table. Abbey Stark, communication

and interior design manager at Ikea USA in Minneapolis, suggests using textiles to help soften up the whole place setting (and they're a great way to personalize your dinner table, too). Use soft, natural colors without patterns to create an elegant look that any mother-in-law would be proud of.

"A tablecloth is an easy and inexpensive way to transform any table," Stark says. This is also the most inexpensive way to customize the dinner table for the occasion. While flatware and centerpieces



Paper plates never looked so good! Colorful wine glasses and Ikea's neutral Vinter 2015 table runners (\$6.99 each) placed horizontally create a festive, yet elegant tablescape.

can get expensive (especially when you start thinking about finer china and professional floral centerpieces), napkins and tablecloths don't have to be. Keeping your dishes the same from dinner party to dinner party doesn't have to get repetitive if you simply switch out the tablecloth. Switching from a chocolate brown at Thanksgiving, for example, to a cream or silvery gray during the winter holidays creates an entirely new look and feel regardless of whether or not your guests have seen your dinnerware before.

But, should you want to update your table settings, it's never been easier than with Ikea's holiday collection. Stark suggests

making every meal special with colored wine glasses. The added pop of color is an unexpected touch on the table and is a bold step away from the traditional clear goblets. The same method can be used with plates: spice up your everyday plates by layering colored and patterned plates.

Don't have the funds for a new set of dishes? Never fear, Stark has an answer for that. "Paper plates are an easy and inexpensive way to liven up your table," she says. "And they make for easy clean up!" With new products hitting the market, paper plates have gotten a makeover, coming in elegant patterns and colors. Don't spend

CONTINUED ON PAGE 56 ➔

all of your time cleaning up when you should be enjoying the evening with your guests. Hint: it's okay to cut a few corners. Your guests will remember the laughs, not the paper plates.

While you're laughing the night away (and not washing dishes), be the perfect host by passing a signature drink served in champagne flutes on a tray. Great presentation doesn't have to require too much effort on your part. "We've added a bit of color to our cocktail, giving some pop to the natural colored glasses and tray," Stark says. It's as easy as that! A neutral tray and glasses will carry you throughout the year — just serve a festive cocktail appropriate to the occasion and your guests will rave.

And, Stark says, don't stop at drinks with your trays. Carry them over to your food presentation as well. She says, "From finger foods to casseroles, serve tasty treats on festive trays and platters to ensure dishes look as good as they smell!"

With food, drink, and the table setting out of the way, all that remains is to perfect the ambience with some music, some drinks at the ready, and to light the candles. "Create a festive mood in the space by adding candlelight," Stark says. "Sparkling lights and candlelight go hand in hand with a festive atmosphere."

To create that atmosphere, Stark says to hang ambient lighting over your dining room; it will add sparkle to your entertainment space. When your guests step away from the table, keep the ambience going. No fireplace? Candles and lanterns are a perfect substitute of subtle, flickering light. If nothing else, good times are never far away when you can set the right mood. There's something about the warm glow of a fire that invites guests to gather around and enjoy each other's company.

As Stark says, hosting the holidays doesn't have to be difficult... or expensive. Set the table, create the ambience, enjoy your guests. It can be as simple as saying, "Happy holidays." ■



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'TIS THE SEASON FOR FALL GARDENING



As we look toward winter, now is the time for fall gardening. Photos courtesy of Southview Design

Take a moment to enjoy fall's beauty and bounty. Take it all in. Breathe deeply. Then start planning for next season's gardens. As the daylight grows shorter and temperatures cool, our landscapes turn rich colors of amber and auburn indicating the oncoming winter months. Take this indication of the changing seasons to settle your garden for winter.

First up, change up your container gardens with fall annuals, and then to winter greens. Turning them out for fall mums, asters,

kale, gourds, and peppers will give your landscape a fresh look with pops of color. As your containers transition from summer to fall, you should also take note to bring in your summer bulbs (cannas, tuberous begonias, dahlias, etc.). These will not survive our winter. Store them in a cool, but not freezing, area and they will be ready to plant in the spring. Also, if you added tropical plants to your containers, consider repotting them and bring them indoors to enjoy as houseplants over the winter months. These tropical plants will give you

Deer, rabbits, and mice can cause tremendous damage to trees and shrubs in your landscape as they forage during winter.

a garden to fuss over during the coldest days of winter. I have a 20-year-old calmondin orange tree that surprises me by blooming each January and filling my home with the scent of a citrus grove. Who needs Florida?

Next, take stock of your landscape overall at this time of year. There is an age-old gardening question, “Do I cut back perennials or not?” I prefer *not* to cut back. Many perennials, especially grasses, offer winter interest. Also, leaving stems present until spring gives me a chance to notice whether a plant survived the winter. On the other hand, if you dealt with foliage diseases during the growing season, cut back and dispose of the debris. This will help to mitigate next spring’s re-infestation. Cut the plant to within 2 to 3 inches of the crown, minimum. If you clip too close, you could expose next year’s buds, resulting in winter damage. If you do choose to cut back your perennials, wait until the leaves have yellowed or turned brown. That’s the signal the plant has stopped storing energy for the spring and is dormant.

Pruning trees or shrubs this time of year may seem like a good idea but stop, drop those pruners and wait until later this winter or early spring. Pruning this time of year promotes new growth that will not have time to harden off prior to winter resulting in a weaker tree or shrub.

However, there are a couple of things you can do for your trees and shrubs. Wrap the trunk of your newly-planted or young trees with a tree wrap you can purchase at any garden center. It protects the trees from sun scald and acts as an insulator from the sun’s warmth, keeping the young tree from thinking “spring.” Be sure to remove the wrap around Easter. If left on too long, there is a chance the wrap will harbor insects or disease.

Deer, rabbits, and mice can cause tremendous damage to trees and shrubs in your landscape as they forage during winter. They like to feed on new growth, girdling trees and even eating shrubs to the ground. Protect your trees and shrubs by caging them with hardware cloth or chicken wire. The fencing/caging should be 2 to 3 inches below the soil line to hinder burrowing under and extend 18 to 24 inches above the anticipated snow line. Spray repellents can also be applied just prior to freezing temperatures.

Adding another blanket of mulch after the ground starts to freeze is another safeguard for perennial garden areas to ensure

the ground stays cold. Wait until the ground has 1 to 2 inches of frost depth then layer a few inches of either straw, hay, or leaves to create that blanket.



FALL IS THE PERFECT TIME OF YEAR TO PLANT.

- Now is the time to install new trees, shrubs, and some perennials such as bearded iris or peonies. Just remember to continue watering the newly planted material until the ground freezes.
- Consider dividing existing perennials, such as daylilies, to rejuvenate soil conditions and plants for an even better show next spring. Consider sharing some of the divisions with your garden buddies.
- Let’s not forget spring flowering bulbs. Get them in the ground now and anticipate their kaleidoscope of color next spring. I love to use scilla, puschkinia, and chinodoxa because they increase in number each year, creating a wonderful drift of color every spring.

SO MANY CHORES. SO LITTLE TIME. THE BIGGEST CHORE IN YOUR LANDSCAPE IS LAWN-RELATED.

- Your lawn will benefit from being cut shorter. It also helps prevent snow mold.
- Keep the leaves raked.
- Continue to water your landscape, especially the newly planted and evergreens. They will benefit from the moisture prior to the ground freezing.
- If you have an irrigation system, this is the time to have it serviced for a blowout. Contact your irrigation service provider to get on the schedule.
- Drain and store the garden hoses.
- Clean your garden tools prior to putting them aside for next season.
- Empty your rain barrel, if you have one. Remember water expands when it freezes.
- Lastly, start gathering your books and catalogues for inspiration as you dream of next year’s garden. They will keep you sane during the darkest, coldest days of winter. ■

Tom Kerby is a landscape architect at Southview Design. He has been a registered landscape architect for over 20 years, and has collaborated with architectural/engineering firms on projects across the country. He is passionate about creating and building meaningful, beautiful spaces as part of the team at Southview Design: www.southviewdesign.com.



Winter prep is an important aspect to fall gardening, be sure to be prepared! Photos courtesy of Southview Design

Front Window

Last week, I was hobbled with a terrible injury! I strained my Achilles tendon! As a result, I've been limping around, pouting, and nursing a bottle of beer like a big baby.

OK, so it's not like my foot was chopped off in a tragic kitchen mishap. But, still! It hurts! And it's kept me from going to the gym, which makes me crabby.

In retaliation, I've punished my failing body by grounding it. I've spent most of the past week sitting in a chair with my leg propped up, staring out the front window and quietly judging the neighbors.

It's just like *Rear Window*, except, unfortunately, I have yet to witness a murder. However, I have seen a lot of irresponsible behavior: people not cleaning up after their dogs; a sloppy, middle-aged woman with an alarming penchant for bedazzled, sleeveless blouses shouting about a failing marriage into a cell phone; a harried dad routinely sneaking out of the house to gulp down a brown liquid from a red Solo cup; vicious children coldly lopping off the heads of flowering plants.

In general, it's a tableau of life in the provinces.

Yes, my friends, I've moved back to the suburbs. After spending my early adulthood living

in the city, and then the past decade nested in a small resort town, I have returned to my roots — that primordial gas cloud of fresh grass clippings, chlorine, gin and tonics, Fourth of July parades, sibling strife, WIFFLE® ball, and parental disappointment that gave me life.

Although I vowed never to return to this kingdom of banal, I'm now here, and happily so. Why? For a broad, a dame, a doll. For love. Cherchez la femme, indeed.

The suburbs, of course, are the home to "good schools." And that's why we're here. My girlfriend's kids are in school, and the schools in our suburb are considered among the best in the state. Yet, you'd never know that from the criticism blasted at them during neighborhood get togethers. Talk of schools, teachers, and administrators dominates every cocktail party and barbecue.

The parents spit out educational acronyms with such venom that it makes the conversations rather thrilling even to an outsider like me, who has absolutely no clue what they're bleating on about. They save special contempt for one acronym — ODR — which is typically only whispered about darkly so as not to alarm the children. Whenever a child hears this term, they immediately stop whatever type of joyful,

frenetic play they're involved in and become catatonic with fear. I imagine ODR as a type of Soviet-era gulag naughty children are banished to when they chew gum in class or engage in some other crime against the school-state.

Since my injury, I've found myself in my own private ODR. Locked into a lounge chair, forced to watch life play out just beyond my reach.

I've seen moms so accustomed to putting other's needs before their own, engaging in small, touching vanities: straightening their hair or applying lipstick in the rearview mirror of their SUV before shuttling a car full of screaming, ungrateful kids to soccer practice. Gaggles of neighborhood children diplomatically settling turf battles through Capture the Flag. And dogs — oh, the number of dogs on the block! — gossiping over the fences with yappy, merry glee.

It's made me want to shuck my dreary perceptions of suburban stultification and join the party. The suburban parties, organized by frazzled parents and fueled by frozen appetizers purchased at Costco, are very different than ones I'm used to — those sparkly affairs dominated by top-shelf liquor and the witty chatter of gay male aesthetes. But it's still a party. And I'm thrilled to have been invited. ■

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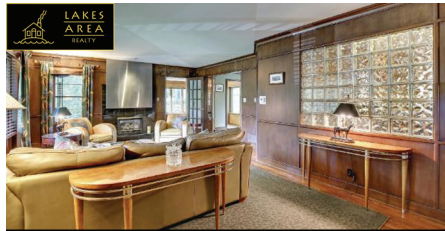
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Bedroom Eyes

In what was perhaps the best pick-up line I've heard in the past six months (coincidentally, the only pick-up line I've heard in the past six months), a man at a bar, after regaling me with stories of his tours in Afghanistan and Iraq, noticed I'd caught something in my eye and asked if I'd like him to help me remove it.

"I have something in my eye?" I blink twice to get it out, whatever it is.

"It's right here," he says and puts his hand on my cheek and his lips to my ear. "My bed."

The rehearsed wit makes him my favorite man in the world, and who would deny a soldier so kind as to offer clearing my vision?

He's straight, I learn, but "experimental," which is a more current expression of what aging millennials grew up hearing from gays in denial: "bi-curious."

A week later I'm on a flight from New York to Boston, accidentally eavesdropping on a conversation between two college-aged women in the row over.

I am not so far removed from their age — I'm in my late 20s — but their conversation is a foreign language. Women's studies majors, both with minors in gender studies, they're using terms such as "agender" and "panromantic" and "graysexual." These words pepper a conversation laced with musings on what it means to "hook up" in 2015, and how marvelously a recent feature in *New York* magazine illustrated the college hook-up culture.

Their conversation intrigues me at first, then makes me feel old and more uninformed than usual, then reminds me of my bedroom-eyed soldier and other men whose curiosities

I've satisfied over the years.

After reading the article in question and plundering the internet, I convinced myself that I've been a cynical asshole since I lost my virginity. I readily admit that until I overheard the women on that plane, I never really bought into "bi." My own experience, after all, told me that "bi" was just a soft opening, a smoother, easier way to come out as gay, nothing more. No one could legitimately be sexually attracted to both *cisgenders*. My relatively apathetic philosophy aligned with the grossly over-reaching, hypocritically judgmental, disgusting "bi now, gay later" bullshit, never mind that I figured "bi-curious" was an outright cop-out.

I don't have the space here to publish a glossary of new words defining ancient sexual truths: that humans' sex lives are indeed more complex than a multiple-choice question. It's a terrifying experience reading about these "new" ideas, as the more you'll learn, the more you'll recognize yourself as the old grumps who long ago starved us of even being a G or L or B or T, let alone a *demi-female* attracted to those identifying *female-binary*.

And it's been a liberating experience for me. Because *yes*, dammit, with this upgraded lexicon I realize that my love life isn't a bipartisan election. I am not automatically sexually aroused by the same people for whom I have romantic feelings. I've often wondered why I sometimes experience romantic interest in women, while simultaneously experiencing zero sexual interest. Turns out I'm possibly a gay *panromantic*. And that's just the start of it.

I'm still wrapping my head around this, and

I'm writing now with an embarrassingly novice understanding of parts of me that have gone unrecognized since I came out. "Gay" has always been more than enough; sexuality has been happily two-dimensional.

A few days ago, as I lay with my bedroom-eyed soldier, I asked him what he felt about all of this. He was repulsed. He called it "politically-correct liberal bullshit" and said that, while he may be innocent on many fronts, he knows all he needs to know about sexuality. "But," he said, "to each their own."

Aren't those words what our community has been hearing for years? Isn't that what it boils down to for conservative politicians who simply "tolerate" equal marriage because it's increasingly irrelevant to the masses but remains alluring to the far right? Isn't that what I was after when I doubted bisexuality?

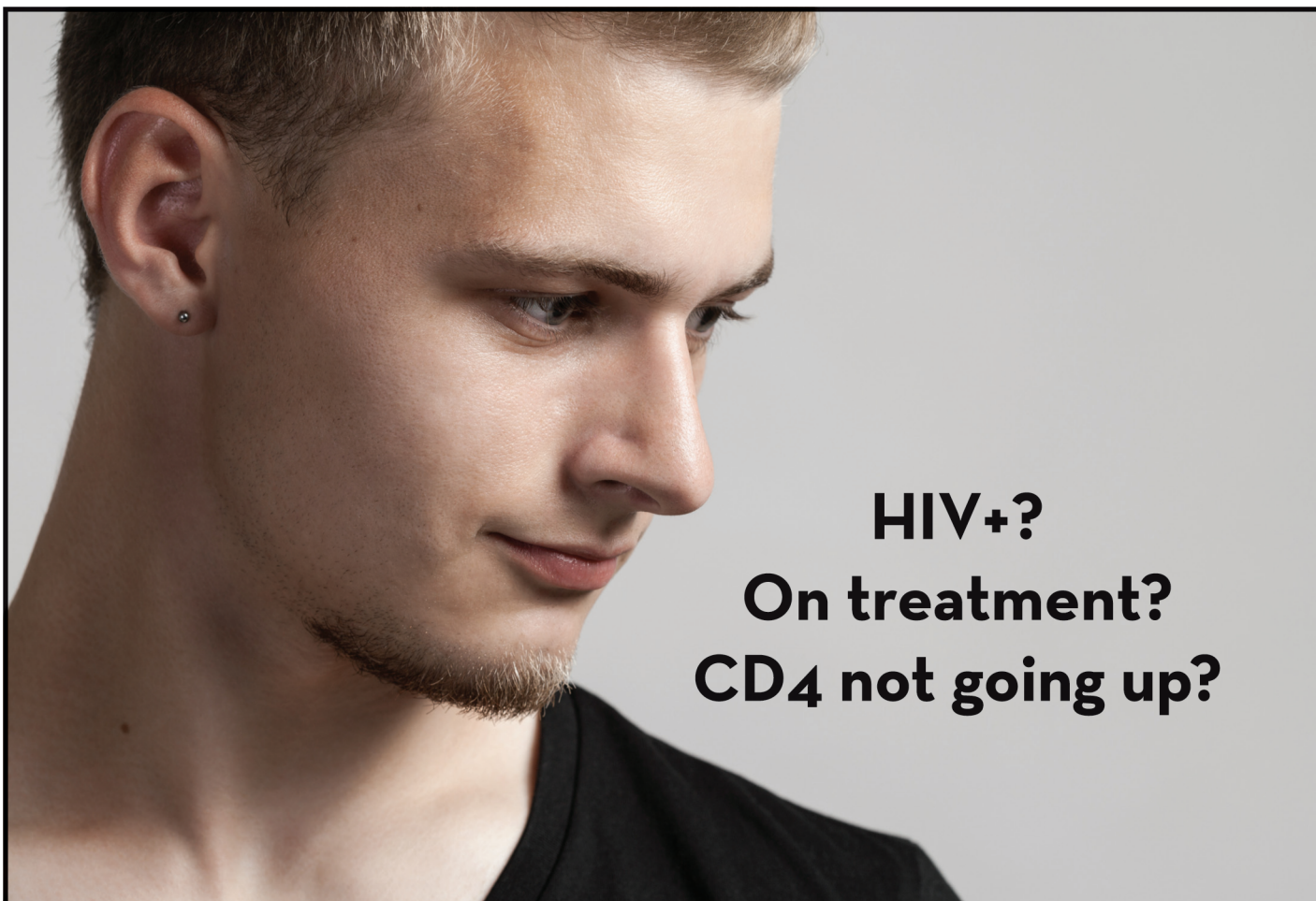
I saw my reflection in his disgusting response. I saw a crudely articulated version of what I felt myself for some members of the GLBT community. I saw my estranged father, who still can't accept that his son is gay.

For the first time, as I lay in bed with a bi-curious experimental straight man, I felt that I was, ironically, one of the most close-minded people in the world.

Here's to fixing that. ■

Reference: "Sex on Campus," *New York magazine*, Oct. 19.

ThroughTheseEyes. JustinJones@gmail.com



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